

119 - Make Money Creating the One Document All Businesses Need (But Most Don't Have)

Laura Davis: [00:00:00] On today's episode, we're talking about the one document all businesses need, but most don't have, and how you can make money creating it.

Laura Moore: Welcome to "JFDI with The Two Lauras". This is the show where we share tips and ideas to help freelance social media managers to win and work with clients and create a flexible business that works around your life.

On the show today, we're talking about a very important document that all businesses using social media need, but very few have: A Brand Voice Guide.

What is it? Why do they need it? And how can you make money creating one of them? That's what we're covering today. And as always, if you have questions about this after the show, then we're here to answer them.

Head over to Facebook, search for "The Social Media Managers Hub" where we can answer all your follow up questions. The group is free for our email subscribers, and you'll just have to pop your name in the box to be let in.

So let's dive straight into it, and let's start with what the heck is a Brand Voice Guide?
[00:01:00]

Laura Davis: At least you said heck.

Laura Moore: That was very American of me.

Laura Davis: I know, very much so.

So, a Brand Voice Guide is a very detailed document, and it's going to essentially contain all the information that anybody working on a brand's marketing can use to ensure that everything, so the social content, your ads, your blogs, your emails, you'll use it to ensure that they all sound like they're coming from the one person or the one overarching brand.

So whether that, you want it to sound like they're all coming from the business owner, if it's quite a small business, or whether it be very kind of tonal to the brand. So for example, if you think of like Wendy's or Innocent Smoothies, there will be hundreds of - it's not actually Innocent Smoothies, is it?

It's just Innocent. Um, they -



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Laura Moore: They sell smoothies, so let's go with it.

Laura Davis: Okay. Let's rebrand. They will have hundreds of people [00:02:00] working on their accounts and, you know, a good handful of them working on just their social accounts, but yet everything that they do all sounds the same. So that is because they will have a Brand Voice Guide.

I'd love to see their Brand Voice Guide, just as a slight caveat.

Laura Moore: Oh, I would too.

Laura Davis: So for example, so some of the things it could include - and we actually, we had an interesting conversation, I don't know whether you saw it, Laura, in the "Hub Facebook group" about this just, I think it was yesterday - so it can include things like the use of emojis.

Like should you, or shouldn't you? Are there certain emojis you shouldn't avoid because we all know some emojis have double meanings. You know, so it's those kind of things, but the conversation I had yesterday was about, because someone was, had got the Brand Voice Guide from "The Social Media Manager's Toolkit", and she was discussing why, why we were asking about celebrities.

So of course, you can just picture it. You want to share something on your Instagram stories, and you want to choose like a GIF, like, I don't know, a celebratory [00:03:00] GIF or, and they choose a celebrity. So like they choose Russell Brand, for example. I don't want to get sued. Are we allowed to say that? Um, and I'm sure he's not listening.

And they choose a funny GIF. Maybe they don't even realise it's Russell Brand. So they share it. And then obviously there's uproar. There's customers saying, I'm never going to shop with you because you support Russell Brand. And all you wanted to do was use a GIF. So a Brand Voice Guide will help you to identify things like that.

Like are there celebrities that you want to be associated with? So for example, we always use Chris Hemsworth and that's fine by us.

Laura Moore: I mean, who wouldn't?



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Laura Davis: Shockingly, there may be some people who don't want to.

So this Brand Voice Guide is your way that you can document all of that so you don't get into kind of any trouble really.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: Yeah. So that's it in a nutshell. Am I right?

Laura Moore: Yeah. [00:04:00] Like, I think lots of people will look at this and think, yeah, but it's, it will tell me whether I need to be formal or conversational, you know, how chatty can I be and all of that stuff. And that is kind of like the tone of voice holds the kind of conversation, but this is much more in depth.

So it doesn't just you know, say, oh, we're quite a formal brand. It will tell you how to sound formal for that brand. If you're a conversational chatty brand, it will tell you how you sound chatty for that brand, you know, what terminology they would use, what words they don't use, how they say certain things, you know, so like if you're commenting and someone, you know, you want to say well done to someone, does that brand literally say well done or do they have another way of saying, oh my God, this is amazing. And like with loads of emojis.

You know, like, do they, do they say things like, I appreciate you? Or do they say things like, thank you, you know, it's just those little nuances that make people sound like themselves or like someone else.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: When you don't have this, it's so obvious that someone else is doing the socials.

And that's why some people [00:05:00] don't like to outsource their socials, because they don't think that it's possible for someone else to sound like them. But when you've got this, you can totally sound like anybody, which is actually a bit scary when you think about it.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Not, not in a scary AI way.



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Laura Davis: And when you're, when you're really utilising a good Brand Voice Guide it's a real selling point. It's something you should be telling people that you have and it's very comprehensive and it's -

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: You know, it covers, it doesn't just cover as like Laura said, the large majority of it's going to be covering that written word, but actually like we've covered is images. It's GIFs. It's emojis.

There's so much in there. It's celebrity, all of that, just little things unfortunately, in the world we live in, people are very quick to, to criticise as well. So it's a good safety blanket, I think, for social media marketers.

And I think I, that's something I always struggle with when I first start working with a client is getting that right.

So having that resource to kind of refer [00:06:00] back to, and it's a working document, you'll constantly need to review it. You know, so a couple of years ago, just back to Russell Brand, a couple of years ago, people will have had him potentially as a, a celebrity, but now they wouldn't want to. Yeah, it'd be a document that will be constantly reviewed like a Bible.

Laura Moore: It's a good way as well to work with a brand that if you don't necessarily really understand them to start with, because especially if they use like technical language and technical jargon that is relevant to their audience. So, you know, it's going to be in content, but you don't really get it. If that's in the brand voice guide, then it's like a dictionary, you know, it would explain things to you.

So if someone's asking a question, you wouldn't just answer it like how Joe Bloggs would answer it, you would answer it how that business would answer it with the right terminology and the right language and stuff. And it makes you sound great.

Laura Davis: Like a, a glossary.

Laura Moore: Like a glossary almost. Yeah.



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Makes you sound amazing. Yeah.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Which is why you can make money from them because.

[00:07:00] Like, you know, this could be part of your onboarding that you do anyway, but it's a big beefy piece of work. You know, you could charge a lot of money for this without really having to do a lot of it yourself, because you can use a document that you're going to give to that client, they're then going to fill it in.

So they're doing the vast majority of the work, but because you've put this document together, and maybe you've filled in bits that you like, and you know, that you know, that, you know, you can still charge a decent amount of money for this, because it's not just for you to work from, it's for everyone in their business to work from.

So if they've got, I don't know, like a web, uh, copywriter or an email marketer or someone who does their print ads, you know, all of these stuff, all the people who are involved in all of that can look at it and they can all use it.

And it's also a really great opportunity for you because if you're working with a client and you've nailed that tone of voice, you've nailed how they sound and you then, I don't know, maybe you want to take on another service from them.

Maybe you want to offer them email marketing or you want to offer them ads management, they [00:08:00] already know you're going to sound like them, so you've done half the job already of selling them on that point, because they know that you've got this big, beefy document that they can refer to, you can refer to, and as long as you've got the skills to actually do the job, you, you sound like them already, so they, it's, it's a confidence builder, isn't it?

Laura Davis: Oh, 100%.

Laura Moore: Who needs a brand voice?

Laura Davis: Everybody.

Laura Moore: There we go.



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Laura Davis: Also all businesses who are doing marketing, really.

Laura Moore: Any marketing, yeah. Totally.

And, and we're not just talking organic here, this isn't just for organic marketers.

Laura Davis: No.

Laura Moore: If you do ads, you should totally be using a brand voice as well, because otherwise you know, how're you going to write your ads properly?

Should we go into kind of why this is so important because I think it's hard to kind of really comprehend because yes, it's about consistency of tone and everyone sounding the same no matter who's working on the account, and who's working on different pieces of it. So that is really important, but it also helps you to really speak to the right people in the [00:09:00] right language.

So I've got a really good example of getting this wrong. I keep seeing an ad, I can't remember who the brand is at the moment, although I probably shouldn't name them anyway.

Laura Davis: Yeah, I was gonna say, don't say it.

Laura Moore: Yeah, I keep seeing an ad and they show me this jumpsuit, which I really, really like. So, and I keep thinking, well, this can't be for me, because the ad copy for this jumpsuit says main character energy on repeat with a fire emoji.

I don't know what that means. I know I'm not down with the kids, but what the hell does main character energy on repeat mean? It doesn't mean anything to me. Does it mean anything to you?

Laura Davis: I don't know.

Laura Moore: No, exactly. So eventually, I've seen this ad so many times and I really like this jumpsuit, so eventually I click through to go and look, is this actually a jumpsuit for me or is it like for a teenager? You know, is it children's clothing? Don't really know.



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And on the website, like the big heading on the website says that they are a brand for Gen X. I'm in Gen X. Gen X [00:10:00] is 1965 to 1976 according to Google.

Laura Davis: I thought Gen X was 1980.

Laura Moore: Well, when I Googled it, it said 1965 to 1976.

Laura Davis: So does that not mean I'm, I'm not Gen X then?

Laura Moore: No, I don't think you are.

Laura Davis: What am I then? Am I a millennial?

Laura Moore: I dunno. Go and Google it.

You Google it while I finish telling my story.

Laura Davis: Okay.

Laura Moore: So anyway, their branding is for people who were like 1965 to 1976, and I am born in 1976, so I'm at the younger age of that, so really, their messaging should speak to me, but it doesn't, because I don't understand what main character on repeat means.

Maybe I'm just not cool. Does anyone actually understand what that means?

Laura Davis: If there is that.

Laura Moore: If this means something to you, please drop into my DMs and tell me what that means.

Laura Davis: Gen X is 1965 to 1980.

Laura Moore: Oh, when I looked it said 1976, but regardless, when were you born?

Laura Davis: 1980 and millennials are 1981 to 1996. I prefer to call myself a millennial.

Laura Moore: As a [00:11:00] 1980 person, do you know what that means?

Laura Davis: Yeah, man. I'm like down with the kids. I'm a millennial.



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No, I haven't got a bloody clue.

Laura Moore: No, so I still like this jumpsuit, but I'm still like, I don't think I can buy it because I don't think it's for me. And I feel like I'll, I'll look like a moron wearing it if it's not really for people of my age.

Do you know what I mean? So it's like the whole messaging and it's probably cost them a fortune showing me this ad and getting me to click a hundred times.

Laura Davis: Well, yeah, you've probably got loads of like people our age clicking on it going, what? Has no one commented? You should comment.

Laura Moore: Not that I've seen. No. No. Not that I've seen. Maybe I should, next time I see it.

Laura Davis: Totally comment. But also, just buy the bloody jumpsuit Laura, you can wear what you want.

Laura Moore: Yeah, I know.

Laura Davis: Anyway. Yeah, well that, but that is a per-, that is a perfect example, isn't it? It's about using the correct language for your target audience, and I suspect a Gen Z has written that. [00:12:00]

Laura Moore: Probably.

Yeah, without a Brand Voice Guide.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Yeah, and they're probably listening to this podcast going, you moron, this is what it means.

Laura Davis: Oh, you're so old.

Laura Moore: But if you are, please drop into my DMs and let me know.

Laura Davis: All right, granny.



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Uh, yes, sorry. I've totally got sidetracked now by how old I feel.

Laura Moore: Not as old as me. Anyway.

Laura Davis: Well, there's always that.

Okay. So, yes, so your brand voice, the one thing that I like about Brand Voice Guides is that you know you're doing it right. Um, and kind of that confidence that really no one, if it's in the guide, no one can question it. So if you have someone in the team going, well, why did you use that emoji?

And it's like, well, look, it's not in the, it's not in the Brand Voice Guide. Like I can't, like, if you've got a problem, add it in, which is what I mean earlier by it has to be this working document.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: But yeah, so in theory, no one can question your content if you are following that Brand Voice Guide.

Laura Moore: Yeah. It kind [00:13:00] of sets boundaries, doesn't it, with those clients.

Laura Davis: And I was gonna say, what, like I personally don't work with clients who want post approval, like I never have, and I never will. I can't cope with the complexities of having to wait for someone to approve it, so I don't work with them.

But I do try to follow, like the archives have got brand voice guidance, probably needs to be updated, probably need to practise what I'm preaching here, but I therefore have the security in knowing that what I am saying is on brand. So I don't need it approved.

And I do get like, before you all come at me, like I do understand that there are some industries where you may have to have a post approval on for accuracy reasons, but that would be it really.

I don't think anyone should, everyone should trust their social media marketer. If they've got a good Brand Voice Guide, then you should just let them go. Let them be free. Let them have that scope of work.



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Laura Moore: I think as well, [00:14:00] like if you think about brands, like, Wendy's and Innocent like we were talking about before, and you see that they will jump on trends so quickly, like so quickly.

But these are big brands who have got like, they will have to also jump through hoops with lawyers about what they say, but they can jump on these trends really quickly because they've got a brand voice.

They know what they can and can't say without having to get approval and there will be things that if you are working with a client that needs approval, there will be things that you don't have to get approval for and that should be in the brand voice. And the things that you do need approval for will be approved far quicker because you've got it right.

Laura Davis: It will, yeah. Yeah, you won't have to be making hundreds of edits.

But I think, like, that Aldi and Marks and Spencers content, about, you know, how they fell out about -

Laura Moore: Colin the Caterpillar?

Laura Davis: Colin the Caterpillar. And they still now, occasionally Aldi will still, and they like, they are close to the line I reckon. They will be able to do that because they've been given their guidelines.

They'll have [00:15:00] boundaries. They'll know what they can do and what they can't do. And some of is questionable, I suspect their like, legal team, like, have to take deep breaths sometimes, but, but they can do all that. They've got the freedom to do that. They don't need to go through, especially in big corporates, go through 10 layers of approval.

They can just do it because they know what they can or can't say. So -

Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely.

I think there's another really good reason to have Brand Voice Guide. And I know that lots of people who listen to this podcast are going to love this reason. If you've got a client who has ever gone rogue and started posting when you're managing their accounts and you've



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put this amazing content out and it's doing really well and then your client puts a really shit post out, you're like, what the hell is this crap?

If you've got a brand voice, then you should sound like them and that crap shouldn't stand out too badly anyway, right?

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: But you can always go back to them and say, amazing that you put that content out. Do you mind if I just tweak it so it fits the brand voice that we're working on? And you can [00:16:00] tweak it and you can say to them, don't, you know, post whatever you want, but make sure you use the brand voice.

So that they're constantly being reined in. And you, your audience, when they see something that's written by them, it doesn't stand out as them thinking, who the hell wrote this? Do you know what I mean? Because it all sounds the same.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Even if it is rubbish, it will at least sound like the brand.

Laura Davis: Yeah. Although I don't think we should be saying post whatever you like.

Laura Moore: No. Clearly not. But you know, if they are one of those clients who's like, well, it's my business. I am going to post whatever I like. Hopefully if they've got guidance, then it will, you know, not be too horrendous.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: So yeah. And it won't stand out in the wrong way to that, you know, the people seeing it.

I also think it's, it gives you a really good starting point for testing and kind of like the parameters. So, you know, like where we were talking about the GIFs and stuff, it might be that you are Chris Hemsworth approved in your brand voice. And you're using those kind of GIFs, for example, and then going down [00:17:00] like a lead balloon.



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And if you had, you know, you could test out other things, you know, not just on GIFs, but on all sorts of messaging. If you've got things that are in the brand voice and you know, right, this is how we always speak. Can we try something else? And it's put in the brand voice, so it still sounds like you, but it's something different.

It gives you testing parameters that your client, you know, has approved and stuff. I think that's a good thing to think about as well.

Laura Davis: Definitely.

Laura Moore: In terms of like what it actually looks like, cause I know people are probably thinking, yeah, well this is great Lauras, but you know, what actually is a brand voice? The only way I can explain a Brand Voice Guide is it's a really detailed, detailed document.

Like there are a lot of questions in there. You're going to ask them a lot of things. And then either you're going to spend time filling it in, or you're going to give it to their client and they're going to spend time filling it in, or you're going to do it together to kind of get all of this information, but it's really, really detailed.

Like, think about anything you've ever written on social, you know, what would you need to know? You need to know what kind of [00:18:00] emojis they use, what kind of GIFs they use, all of those basic things. But you also want to know, like, what is their, what does their sentence structure sound like? What words do they use all the time?

What words would they never use? Like, there's loads of words that Laura and I would never use. We would never say elevate, for example. But ChatGPT will all the time. So, you know, if there's words like that that we would never use, they should be in the Brand Voice Guide so you can't accidentally use them, you know?

There's loads and loads of different things like that. It's all detailed out so that everyone can go and look at this document. And like Laura said, it's a working document. So it's generally like a Google Doc would be a really good way to deliver a brand voice rather than a PDF, cause that's not really a working document.

Think about how you can get it so that people can make tweaks and stuff as and when they need to. If you need help with this, we have got a really in depth template for your Brand Voice Guide in "The Social Media Managers Toolkit".



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Laura Davis: 24 pages.

Laura Moore: Wow.

Laura Davis: Yes, it's big, big and beefy.

Laura Moore: It's in "The Social Media Managers Toolkit".

If you go to the [00:19:00] thetwolauras.com/toolkit we'll put the link in the show notes, then you'll get that inside your "Toolkit" when you sign up. And if you've already got access to the "Toolkit", you'll find that in the 'Business Blueprint section'.

Laura Davis: You'll want to include your brand voice as part of your strategy.

So if you're working with clients, and within the "Toolkit" it's part of our 'Strategy Template', but also it's in there as a standalone document. Cause for some, you know, you can just charge for that. You can just say to a business, I'll do your Brand Voice Guide and charge as a separate entity.

Or sometimes you can have - they maybe they've already got a strategy for their social media, but they haven't got a Brand Voice Guide, which is often the way, so you can say, look, let me write this Brand Voice Guide for you to complement that strategy so that they are together, but also separately within the "Toolkit".

Laura Moore: Do you know what I would love to test?

And I haven't done this and we should totally do this, is uploading the Brand Voice Guide into ChatGPT when you're asking it to write copy and seeing what that brings out.

[00:20:00] Let's test that after this episode.

Laura Davis: Ooh, yes.

Laura Moore: Yeah. If you've already got your Brand Voice Guide for a client, yeah, go ahead. Do it. See, see what happens.

Let us know.

Laura Davis: Yeah, nice.



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Laura Moore: Let us know if it still puts a dodgy rocket emoji in.

Laura Davis: And tells you to elevate.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: So that's it. That's our whistle stop tour of the most crucial document that you should all have within your businesses, but also your clients' businesses. So you can work happily and on brand forevermore.

Laura Moore: Sound happy.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Use the right happy emojis, the right happy GIFs.

Laura Davis: Yeah. No awkward aubergine emojis here.

Laura Moore: And if you do want to drop into our DMs with a GIF, then our branded, um, GIF is always Hemsworth, always Chris. So feel free to speak to us in our language.

Laura Davis: Yeah. Yeah. Speak to the heart.

Laura Moore: So that's it. We are taking August off of the podcast.

So we will be [00:21:00] back same time, same place in September. I hope you get some sunshine wherever you are and get to have a rest and a relax. And yeah, if you've got any questions in the meantime, we will be hanging out in the Facebook group, but we will see you in September. Ta ra!

Laura Davis: Bye!

